

## Wittgenstein's Notion of 'Higher': A Reading from Sankara's Conception of Jnana

By Manoranjan Mallick\* & Pragyanparamita Mohapatra<sup>‡</sup>

*This paper aims to revisit Wittgenstein's notion of 'higher' from the understanding of Sankara's conception of Jnana. According to Wittgenstein, values cannot be captured within the network of facts about living things or dead matters in the world; they are not the case in the world and are not relational, they are higher. That is why, we cannot call values natural in any sense of the expression. This compels Wittgenstein to appeal to the transcendental origin of the values. In this way, the world is bereft of the values and subsequently the knowledge about the values can be attained when the self is to be seen not in the world, rather be experienced with the world. The knowledge that Wittgenstein speaks about is not the ordinary knowledge of the world which logic and science provide, but is the knowledge of the divine state where one can grasp the oneness of the life and world. Such knowledge of moral interaction between the self and world seems to be closer to Sankara's conception of Jnana which gives the knowledge of the identity of Jiva and Brahman. According to Sankara, it is a paramarthika experience of the atman which can attain the knowledge of absolute value or Brahman while remaining engaged in the worldly pursuits. The knowledge of absolute value for him, is a form of realization or anubhava of the self or atman which is distinct from knowledge of an intellectual or logical kind.*

**Keywords:** Wittgenstein, Sankara, world, self, higher, Brahman

### Introduction

This paper aims to revisit Wittgenstein's notion of 'higher' from the understanding of Sankara's conception of Jnana. According to Wittgenstein, the world is nothing more than the concatenation of contingent facts. Hence, no values exist in the world as values are supernatural in nature. Values cannot be captured within the network of facts about living things or dead matters in the world; they are not the case in the world and are not relational, they are higher. That is why, we cannot call values natural in any sense of the expression. This compels Wittgenstein to appeal to the transcendental origin of the values. Values originate from a transcendental vision of reality. They do not change along with the changes in the facts or events of the world. They are good in themselves and thereby, they are valuable for their own sake. They are intrinsically valuable and hence, are eternal, and unconditional. In this way, the world is bereft of the values and subsequently the knowledge about the values can be attained when the self is to be seen not *in* the world, rather be experienced *with* the world. The knowledge that

---

\*Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Utkal University, India.

<sup>‡</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, Utkal University, India.

Wittgenstein speaks about is not the ordinary knowledge of the world which logic and science provide, but is the knowledge of the divine state where one can grasp the oneness of the life and world. Such knowledge of moral interaction between the self and world seems to be closer to Sankara's conception of Jnana which gives the knowledge of the identity of *Jiva* and *Brahman*. According to Sankara, it is a paramarthika experience of the atman which can attain the knowledge of absolute value or Brahman while remaining engaged in the worldly pursuits. The knowledge of absolute value for him, is a form of realization or *anubhava* of the self or atman which is distinct from knowledge of an intellectual or logical kind. This paper also analyses and relates the distinction that Wittgenstein has made between the world (relational) and value (absolute) with the distinction between vyavaharika satta (relational) and parmarthika satta (absolute) in Sankara's philosophy.

### **Ethical Values and the Limits of Language**

According to Wittgenstein, no value exists in the world, and 'if it did exist, it would have no value' (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.41). If there is anything that does have value, it must lie outside 'what happens and is the case'. For all that happens and is the case in the world is entirely accidental and contingent in nature. What makes values non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.41). But values—the ethical, aesthetic, and religious, are non-accidental, unconditional and are devoid of empirical content. They are seen as higher. In this sense, Wittgenstein is right in claiming that the world is bereft of the ethical values as it contains nothing more than the facts. For him, values are viewed as supernatural in nature and cannot be ascribed anything natural. So, ethical values such as 'good', 'bad', 'evil', etc., can never be properties of anything whose subject is factual in nature.

What is Good is Divine also. That, strangely enough, sums up my ethics. Only something Supernatural can express the Supernatural. You cannot lead people to the good; you can only lead them to some place or other; the good lies outside the space of facts (Wittgenstein 1980, p. 3).

Good is not like an object, state of affairs, or place in the world which can be described in terms of facts. Proclaiming good as supernatural locates it outside the domain of language. Since all meaningful propositions are necessarily descriptive in nature as they fulfill the bipolar condition. That is why, propositions can express nothing that is higher (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.42). In other words, there are no propositions which, in any absolute sense, are sublime, important, or trivial. This makes Wittgenstein's contention very clear that all judgments of relative value can only be shown as statements of facts, but no statement of facts can imply a judgment of absolute value (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 7). Hence, the expression 'value-fact' would be a contradiction.

Judgments of absolute value being beyond the facts cannot be captured by the natural language; they convey something higher. Words in natural language are

like vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense. They cannot be used meaningfully to express something which is supernatural or higher. "Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural and our words will only express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I were to pour out a gallon over it" (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 7). Ethics in this sense, being higher, cannot find place in a book on natural science, the subject matter of which could never be intrinsically sublime and above all other subject matters. Wittgenstein puts it powerfully by using a metaphor of a book on Ethics if written, this book, with an explosion, would destroy all the other books in the world (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 8). That is, the subject matter of such book being above all other would cease the possibility of having books on any other subject matter. In *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein mentions three absolute values namely: (1) the experience of wonder at the existence of the world; (2) the feeling of being absolutely safe; and (3) the experience of feeling guilty (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 10). These experiences are mystical feeling in the sense that they are not a part of our everyday life. Absurdity arises when we are inclined to ascribe absolute values in expressing our everyday experiences. This is a complete misuse of language when we express these experiences of absolute values. These expressions of absolute values are failed to fulfil the minimal condition of the meaningful propositions as they belong to the truly higher life. Wittgenstein's idea of keeping ethical values outside the world does not mean that Wittgenstein has ruled out the significance of the world. Rather he wants to go beyond the world and make move for the transcendental ethics which pertains to the higher knowledge of life and the world. Wittgenstein is right in claiming that the sense of the world cannot be captured within the network of facts in the world; it must lie outside the world (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.41).

### **Transcendental Ethics**

Ethics is broadly an enquiry into 'what is most valuable and important in life' (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 5); it does not delve into the empirical world. Wittgenstein believes that what is valuable and meaningful in life falls outside the realm of science. It is not included in the subject matter of scientific enquiry. By its very nature ethics deals with the core issues of human life. Wittgenstein believes that the significant issues of human life must be distinguished from the scientific issues. "We feel that even when all *possible* scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course there are then no questions left, and this itself is the answer" (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.52). This remark clearly states that the problems of human life cannot be captured within the scientific enquiry. In order to understand the meaning of life and world, it is required to understand the transcendental vision of reality rather than empirical vision alone.

For Wittgenstein, the metaphysical significance of the problems of life would be revealed when they are brought to relate with the problems of ethics. He claims that what gives meaning to life or what makes life happy or unhappy, does not lie within the world. Since the problems of life are not questions for scientific enquiry

their solutions cannot be located within the boundaries of natural sciences. Solution to the problems of human life are to be found in life itself, in the very fact of unfolding of how one lives in the world. In other words, the problems of life are pertaining to the very sense of life. It depends on subject's attitude how she/he looks at the world and relates with it. It has to do with the attitude of the subject to see the facts in the world and be in agreement with it – 'seeing the world aright' (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.54). The notion of subject or willing subject comes at the center to establish the primacy of 'the higher.' The subject is considered as willing subject when it is located only at transcendental level. Metaphysical self, for Wittgenstein, is the willing subject which serves the purpose of human existence and its meaning in life. This purpose can be realised when the willing subject is viewed as the limit of the world. Things in the world would acquire "significance" only through their relation with my will (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 84). The notion of willing subject becomes very crucial in Wittgenstein's philosophy as it brings moral significance into the world. Wittgenstein's notion of ethics gives a broader perspective to life in its relation with the world. Ethics thus concerns to the higher knowledge of life and the world and aims at bringing about the aspiration of realizing the ultimate meaning of life.

Wittgenstein is very cautious in acknowledging the relationship between ethics and the world when he says, ethics does not treat of the world; ethics must be a condition of the world (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 77). Ethics being transcendental provides the possible conditions under which an ethically meaningful world is made possible. This relation between the two is established by the subject or 'I' which does not belong to the world but is its limit (see Mallick and Sirola 2012). The change in the attitude of the subject conditions the way of seeing the world. The subject morally interacts with the world at metaphysical level making the world ethically meaningful. Such interaction is comprehensible only if the transcendental subject is acknowledged as the bearer of the ethical values. This makes Wittgenstein to say that "Good and evil only enter through the *subject*... It would be possible to say (a la Schopenhauer): it is not the world of Idea that is either good or evil; but the willing subject" Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 79). To say, what is good and evil is essentially the I, not the world of living being or thing (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 80) is to claim that no ethics would be possible without the subject or 'I'. In other words, ethics is possible even if there is only myself or the 'I' and nothing else. Self being beyond the world cannot bring any changes in the world; it cannot interfere with what happens in the world. The self remains only as a transcendental spectator of what happens in the world. The relation between the self and *the world* is neither logical nor causal. Wittgenstein's effort is to develop an understanding how the self is metaphysically related with *the world*. As he writes, "The world is given to *me*, i.e., my will enters into the world completely from outside as into something that is already there" (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74). Now a question can be posed here, how moral values enter into the world when the subject is said not be part of the world. Wittgenstein's response to the question is that the moral will is related to the world from the outside rather than inside as a metaphysical subject. The world is given to us and everybody interacts with others in the world through 'their own worlds.' The self can change the meaning of the

world with the change in the attitude but not the facts in the world. My will penetrates the world and that will is seen as good and evil (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 73). The subject is not directly associated with the world but it makes its appearance into the world through, what Wittgenstein calls, world's being *my* world. The willing subject and the world are independent but they interact morally when the willing subject enters into the world through 'the world being *my world*.'

### **Happy and Unhappy Life: A Transcendental Outlook**

Wittgensteinian solipsistic 'I' makes its appearance in philosophy through the world's being *my* world (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 80). It is a metaphysical subject that makes the world as 'my world'. The metaphysical subject is a limit of the world. Each metaphysical subject has their own limits of the world and hence, there are many 'my worlds' as there are many metaphysical subjects. I or self is not only transcending the hard world but also other's world. His solipsistic position makes a claim for the existence of the hard world which is commonly available for every self to create its own world. Wittgenstein's notion of the willing subject identifies with the metaphysical 'I' which is not situated anywhere in world rather it is the limits of the world. The self, as conceived by Wittgenstein, is causally inefficacious over the events in the world. The self is metaphysically related with the world and manifests itself by seeing the world as *my world*. The world i.e., my world gets metaphysical status only within the framework set by the self. When the world is seen as a limited whole, as *my world*, the willing subject finds a transcendental moral sphere to interact with the world. In this sense, for Wittgenstein, transcendental moral sphere can be created only when the self is seen not *in* the world but *with* the world.

The willing subject determines the ethical status which provides meaning to the world. The facts that constitute the world remain the same but the limits of the world get changed. Depending on the attitude of willing subject the same world may appear good or bad. Subsequently, good or bad will result in making it happy or unhappy. The attitude of the willing subject manifests itself in its happiness or unhappiness. It is morally active and maintains moral influence on the world. The world which is given to us has no value, but the way of seeing it makes it happy or unhappy. It is the attitude of the self which makes one happy or unhappy. In one sense, of course the happy man and the unhappy man do not live in two different worlds, for the world in which they reside is materially or factually the same world. In other sense, one may even say that they both live in two different worlds. To speak plainly, while a good man makes the world good, a bad man makes the same world a hell...The world remains morally neutral (Pradhan 2008). The same world may appear different to each of us depending on the way of seeing or the attitude towards it. "The willing subject would have to be happy or unhappy, and happiness and unhappiness could not be part of the world" (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 79). It is 'I' who is either happy or unhappy (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74). Though ontologically there is no difference but the world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.43). Their incommensurability

is only in terms of seeing the world differently from a transcendental point of view.

The only life that is happy is the life that can renounce the amenities of the world (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 81). It implies that man's happiness is not accidental or contingent on man's life of amenities which are temporal and accidental. Happiness is unconditional and absolute which remains indifferent to the facts in the world. Like 'good', happiness is treated in absolute sense of being independent of the spatio-temporal world. Renunciation does not mean giving up the facts in the world rather to see them all together and accept them with equanimity at any moment. Will is good when it maintains the harmony between the subject and the happenings of the world. And the will is bad when it fails to maintain this harmony between the subject and the facts in the world. A man is happy;

Who remains indifferent to the on-going in the world because he knows that they cannot be eliminated and also because he realizes that he cannot eliminate them. Wittgenstein's ideas of the good man is comparable to Bhagavadgita's idea of a sthitaprajna or the man of steadfast wisdom who remains unaffected by the happenings of the world (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 73).

It may be asked here, how can a man renounce the happening of the world he lives in? In other words, how can a man be happy at all when he had to suffer all the misery of this world? Wittgenstein responds to it by saying that the self can renounce any influence of the happenings of the world through the life of knowledge. For Wittgenstein, the life of knowledge is the life that is happy in spite of the misery of the world (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 81). That would be possible only when the self is represented as the transcendental self.

The life of knowledge is possible while someone lives in the present. Only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74). Living in the present makes one indifferent towards worldly miseries, sorrows, fear and death, etc., as the willing subject is beyond the spatio-temporal world. Only in this sense one can appreciate when Wittgenstein says: "A happy man must have no fear. Not even in the face of death (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74). "Fear in that face of death is the best sign of a false i.e., a bad life" (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 75). It is in psycho-physical life where the empirical ego has relation with the material world. An unhappy man lives in time and therefore, would face the fear of death and would be affected worldly miseries. Wittgenstein further says, In order to live happily I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what 'being happy' means (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 75). To be happy, one needs to accept with equanimity, whatever is the case in the world. Man's happiness is not dependent on life of amenities and comfort which are temporal and accidental. Happiness is unconditional and absolute and remains indifferent to the facts in the world. Wittgenstein indicates clearly that the good conscience is the happiness that the life of knowledge preserves (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 81). Conscience is the voice of God (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 75). So, a man who is happy must be lived as per direction of God. Here, Wittgenstein becomes somewhat prophetic in suggesting that the happy life is the only right life (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 78). Act according to your conscience whatever it may be. A happy life is to live in accordance with

one's conscience, where conscience is identified with voice of God. God manifests itself in the world seen as whole. In other words, to see God is to see the facts in the world not individually, but together as whole. God does not reveal himself in the form of any individual being or particular thing of the world such as a stone, man, tree, etc. in the world (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.4321). It is not any particular fact or facts in the world which has any significance in this sense. When one sees the facts together in the right way, one sees them as the manifestation of the divine will or good will. "God cannot be seen as revealed more in any one fact or set of facts than another. It is the world as a whole, rather than any set of facts in it, which manifests God." Doing the will of God is to see the life and the world as one. The self maintains harmony between the life and the world. But when the self is not in agreement with the world, the conscience upset this equilibrium. Life is meaningful when this equilibrium is maintained; I act according to my conscience. Meaningful life is all about attaining a *harmony* between the life and the world. To believe in a God means to understand the question about the meaning of life. To believe in a God means to see that life has a meaning (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74). This leads to the realization of the higher order of the world and the life. It is the knowledge of higher order of the self and its relation to the world.

The knowledge that Wittgenstein speaks about is not the ordinary knowledge of the world which science provides, but is the knowledge of the highest order, namely the philosophical or metaphysical knowledge that follows from contemplation on life and the world. By knowledge he meant the enlightenment that secures the release of the mind from the particular facts of the world; it leads the mind to the knowledge of the whole world *sub specie aeternitatis* (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 74).

Morally willing subject's 'seeing the world aright' presupposes viewing the life and world *sub specie aeternitatis* (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.45). Feeling the world as a whole – a limited whole, as *my world*, is to be conscious of another aspect of the same reality. It has metaphysical significance to conceive the life lived in the present where it becomes eternal. Temporal standpoint cannot yield the perception of the world and life shaped by absolute values. The ability to live one's life happily 'in agreement with' the facts of the world depends on an attitude of indifference to the way the world of facts impinge on us. Wittgenstein's remark: I can make myself independent of the world—and so in a certain sense master it—renouncing any influence on happenings (Wittgenstein 1961a, p. 73). The self which is bounded within the limits of its own solipsistic world has to step out from the individualistic way of seeing the world and recognize the facts of the world with equanimity whatever they may be. One could come into agreement with the facts of the world together by seeing them as a limited whole which Wittgenstein identifies with '*das Mystische*' (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.45). It is the mystical feeling or experience where one can grasp the oneness of the life and world. It is the realization of the higher consciousness where there is no scope of identifying with the empirical contents of the world. Only in this sense, life becomes eternal and realizes its higher meaning – its value.

## Interface with Sankara's Notion of Higher

The higher realm of absolute values in Wittgenstein's ethics seems to be closer to the realm of Sankara's conception of Brahman. The natural language has to be lost its meaning while dealing with the higher realm of values. The natural world is the subject matter of the natural sciences as the natural facts can be stated only in the natural language. Wittgenstein's argument against the supremacy of language in ethics reminds us of the Advaitic view that the Brahman transcends language and ordinary experiences (see Pradhan 2009). Sankara argues like Wittgenstein that Brahman is indefinable and indescribable as it is transcendental in nature and hence, nothing can be said about it. The point is that the absolute values like Brahman and Good, etc. are so sublime that speaking of them we may only make them less and less sublime (Pradhan 2009, p. 295). They are beyond the language. Sankara makes a distinction between the higher experience of Brahman and the experience of the world. The values of the world according to Sankara, are relative and describable by means of language from the vyavaharika point of view. The world is true for all practical purposes. However, from the parmarthika point of view, the values of the world are invariant and absolute in nature. It is the world of reality that is viewed as Brahman. It is higher and hence, indefinable (anirukta). To understand the higher experience one has to transcend language. Such higher experience *cannot be expressed meaningfully by language*. They make themselves manifest (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.522). *Tractatus* further claims, "Whereof we cannot speak, thereof we must pass over in silence" (Wittgenstein 1961b, #7). In Vivekachudamani, Sankara too says that Atman and Brahman make themselves manifest, provided certain conditions are satisfied. He says: "This Atman which is an ever-present reality manifests itself as soon as the right means of knowledge are present, and does not depend upon either place, or time, or (ceremonial) purity" (VC: 531-32). In the case of all higher experiences, saying is replaced by showing. To the one who has realised them, the language used to describe, or explain such experience are nothing but nonsensical. For him, it is beyond language, ineffable and in nutshell, it is impossible to describe in words. They are mystic in nature and belong to the realm of transcendental. According to Sankara, Ataman is identified with Brahman and therefore, he claims, '*Brahman satyam jaganmithya jivo brahmaiva naparah*' (BM: 20). Brahman is the real and the world is false. The individual self is non-different from the Brahman. Brahman is the only reality. It is absolute; there is nothing said to be real except Brahman.

According to Sankara, the world is considered as mithya or false; it is merely appearance of brahman. But when Sankara claims 'Brahman satya jagat mithya' he does not rule out the existence of the external world. In view of Sankara, mithya does not mean non-existent (asat). The mithya has existence but its existence is relative in nature. The world exists because it appears for a while but it is not real since it disappears later. The world is directly perceived in everyday life and is not denied by any other ordinary knowledge except the knowledge of Brahman. Therefore, Sankara claims, there is no ground to rule out the existence of the world completely. It is true that the world is viewed as mithya or false by Sankara. In this sense, the world is mithya by comparison with Brahman which is the only reality.



So, Brahman is regarded as 'sat' or absolute real. But this does not mean that Sankara regards the world as mere fiction. By 'asat' Sankara means that which is totally non-existent and is never experienced, e.g., like the sky flower which is never experienced. Accordingly, the world is neither 'sat', since it is vanished by the knowledge of Brahman; nor 'asat' (AS: 230), since it becomes the object of knowledge. The world is false because it is not established by the real knowledge.

Brahman is the cause of the world and that world is the appearance of the Brahman. This appearance the world is created by maya, inherent power of Brahman. When the Brahman is endowed with maya sakti and manifests itself as the cause of the world then it becomes Isvara or God. Brahman, the cause does not really produce or transform into the world, i.e., effect. There is no real change taken place in Brahman. It is changeless and formless. Maya is actually Power of Brahman. The unchanging material cause is known as vivarta-karana. Brahman is not really transformed into the world; it merely appears as the world through the illusory power of maya. Sankara claims that Brahman is the cause of the world, not by transformation or parinama but through vivarta or appearance. Brahman does not really change into world. If Brahman is to transform into the world discarding its nature, then Brahman will no longer remain eternal or nitya. Consequently, it is to be accepted that Brahman simply appears as the world due to maya without discarding its nature (AS: 936). The world is a mere appearance of the Brahman. When a substance falsely appears to be something different without discarding its real nature, it is called vivarta or appearance. It is an illusory modification of a substance. In the vivarta, nothing is really changed into existence as an effect. Rather the cause itself appears to be something different. For example, when a rope appears as a snake; the rope does not really change into the snake rather the rope simply appears as the snake. Here, the cause, rope is real, and the effect, snake is not real; it is mere appearance. They are the different aspects of reality. Actually no effect has been taken place. The effect does not exist apart from the cause, i.e., the effect is merely a false appearance of the cause. Similarly, Brahman does not change into the world, rather it appears as the world and just a rope as the snake (BH: 1). The world cannot be viewed as a transformation of its cause, Brahman, because Brahman, being partless and immutable, cannot undergo any changes (SU: 6.9). Brahman is the only real; and the world is unreal. The world has no reality apart from the Brahman and just as, snake has not reality apart from rope. So the reality of the world comes into existence since the existence of the Brahman is acknowledged as an absolute true, apart from which the world has no reality; but it continues to exist as long as the Brahman is not realised. When Brahman is realized, the world ceases to exist.

The realization of Brahman can be attained through knowledge or Jnana. Such knowledge can be attained when someone possesses four kinds of qualifications (see Musalgaonkar 2014, p. 13). 1. Nitya-anitya- vastu-viveka (discrimination between eternal and non-eternal). 2. Iha-amutra-phala-bhoga-viraaga (renunciation from worldly affairs and heavenly affairs). 3. Samadi-satka-sampatti (the six-fold qualities- control of the *antahkarana*, control of external sense organs, cessation of worldly actions, the tolerating of *tāpatraya* (suffering caused by internal factors-diseases and external forces-cyclone), the faith in Guru and Vedas, the concentrating

of the mind on God and Guru. 4. Mumuksutva (desire for moksa or liberation i.e., release from the cycle of births and deaths). So knowledge of Brahman can be attained while living *with* world but not *in* the world. Such knowledge leads to liberation because it is highest knowledge that man can attain regarding the self and the world. This metaphysical aspect of the world cannot be understood by applying the method of science and logic rather it is a realisation or *anubhava* of atman or self which is seen not *in* the world but *with* it. The identification of atman with Brahman, is the higher order knowledge. It is not the vyavaharika or everyday experience of the atman which is aparoksa or immediate; rather it is the paramarthika experience of the atman which is glorified as Paramatman or Brahman after the removal of avidya. So the world of appearance is not absolutely real like Brahman since it disappears when the knowledge of Brahman is attained. Thus, Sankara argues that the world is identical with Brahman, just as jars, plates, etc, are identical with clay (VC: 229). In this context, Vivekacudamani says that this world is an expression of Brahman, it is brahma-maya because the existence of superimposed is not different from its substratum (VC: 231). So, it can be said that with the attainment of the knowledge of Brahman, the world does not vanish, it only revealed as identical with Brahman. So, the world has no separate existence apart from Brahman. This knowledge of Brahman is possible when the self transcends the world. In this sense, the self is seen as transcendental in character which remains indifferent to the happenings of the worldly facts. The intricacy of the transcendental character of the self is to be brought into discussion when knowledge of the Brahman arises. The notion of metaphysical subject comes at the center to establish the primacy of the higher knowledge of Brahman.

It is not correct to say that there are two distinct types of self or subject – thinking self and metaphysical self. It would be more appropriate to see them as two aspects of the self. Sankara makes it very clear by drawing a distinction between 'empirical self' and 'metaphysical self'. The empirical self is identified with psychophysical self as the combination of mind and body or soul. It remains at the centre of the world. But the willing subject is a metaphysical subject who is not *in* the world but *with* it as regarded by Wittgenstein. This conceptual duality between 'empirical self' and 'metaphysical self' is significant and is to be noticed in Sankara's philosophy. The metaphysical self is the real self. It is the higher self that cannot be captured within the network of the facts in the world. In this way, self cannot be reduced only to a thinking or empirical self in the domain of philosophy. Sankara emphasizes on metaphysical self or 'I' in order to understand the higher order of the world and life from paramarthika viewpoint.

Like Wittgenstein's usages of ordinary and philosophical 'I', Sankara also makes a distinction between the "Self-in-man and Self-of-man." (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 145). The self-in-man is not identical with the self-viewed as pure consciousness rather associates with body-sense-mind complex. This kind of self is identified with having name and form; it is embodied with qualities, so that, it is objectively perceivable. However, another dimension of the self is viewed as Self-of-the-world which is non-relational to worldly facts. Similarly Wittgenstein also uses the word 'I' or self in two different senses. In ordinary usages, the word 'I' refers to physical body (i.e., possessor or owner). When I utter the statement, 'I am

in Mumbai,' here, the word 'I' refers to my body. But in another usage, the word, 'I' cannot refer to the human body or soul but rather it is regarded as 'the metaphysical self'. It is the subject which is considered as a 'philosophical 'I'' can neither get influenced by success nor by failure because it is affected by the worldly affairs. The self is Brahman. It is the self-of-man. It is devoid of attributes. Being immutable, it has no changes like origination, destruction, etc. But in the case of "self-in-man", the self is caught in man's experience – waking, dreaming, etc. the self-in-man is not the real self. "Having name and form, it is endowed with attributes. It is finite and composite. It is subject to change." (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 145). The self-in-man is not the real self. The identification of the self with the body is due to the avidya or ignorance. However, for attainment of liberation, what is required is the knowledge of the real self.

If ignorance causes bondage by bringing about false identification with the body and the things of the world, then it can be removed only by knowledge. If man can remain himself as the Self without any attachment to the body and the things of the world, i.e. if man can remain without the senses of the "I" and "mine" even though he is for all practical purposes, tenanted of the body, then he is free even while he is alive; he has no "of-relation" with anything. Such a person: is called the liberated-in life (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 145).

So man can attain liberation in life while remaining engaged in the worldly pursuits. This idea of man is more close to the *Bhagavadgita's* idea of the *Brahmic state* or the man of steadfast wisdom who remains unaffected by the happenings of the world. According to *Bhagvad Gita*,

Once attachment for the objects of the senses is given a place in the mind, it will be disastrous, because attachment gives rise to desire, and desire breeds anger. The next step is delusion and the mind gets confused and understanding is lost. Destruction follows in its wake. So, the senses should be controlled, and the man into whom all desires enter as the waters enter the sea, attains peace. This is the Divine state and that is the bliss of the Brahmic state from where no man can ever fall again (*BG*: 2.62).

Bondage is caused by the ignorance of bringing the false identification of the self with the body and the worldly objects. It conceals (avarana) the true knowledge. For attaining liberation, knowledge of the uniqueness of the self is required. If a man can remain himself without identifying completely with mind-sense-body complex, i.e., 'ego' ('I', my, mine), then he is free even while he is alive; and he has no association with anything in spatio-temporal duration. Such a person is called the 'liberated-in-life' (Jivanmukta) (see Balasubramanian 1985, pp. 218–219). The Svetasvatara Upanisad says, "only by knowing him one passes over death; there is no other path for going there" (*SU*: 3.8). It means once a man realizes the true nature of the self then he himself transcends the psycho-psychical life where death is immaterial. It is very closely related to Wittgensteinian notion of eternal life where the self passes over the death and it stands in state of timelessness. This is called eternal life where death does not occur and hence, has

'no end in just the way in which our visual field has no limits' (Wittgenstein 1961b, #6.4311). "Death only takes away the world from us, at death we have transcended the world... We are a part of eternity, and this eternity is not something which we can acquire only *after* our death. For we can be a part of eternity, of eternal life, even in the *present*, i.e., before our death." (Chandra 2002, p. 26).

The self, according to Sankara, is placed in the domain of transcendental reality which cannot be objectively given in the world. All that is given as 'object' can be experienced but subject cannot be experienced. Therefore, "the subject is different from object." (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 143). When someone says, 'I am in pain, he is simply superimposing the contingent property of body or mind to the domain of the subject. This gives an erroneous concept of the self for Sankara. The self would cease its metaphysical significance when it is perceived as an object in the phenomenal world. This is called *adhyasa* or illusion (*maya*) due to ignorance. Self or 'I', for Sankara, is viewed as absolute and hence, cannot be ascribed to the persons. 'I' cannot be anything like what we use 'I' as an individual person in our language. Self or 'I' being metaphysical, is not expressible in natural language. That is why, we cannot use 'self' phenomenal in any sense of the term. The self or 'I' is not the name of an individual person. Here the point is made "that 'I' never have to use criteria to identify who "I", is as I sometimes have to do with persons (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 140). This makes Sankara to appeal to the divine origin of the self or 'I'. It is non-different from Brahman. Sankara's main contention is that the self as the subject of experience is *ex hypothesi* distinction from everything that is objective and is of eternally self-same nature; but we in our ordinary experience perceive the body-sense-mind complex (which is both objective and variable) as the self. "This is *adhyasa*, or the natural erroneous tendency to translocate the properties of one entity on another." (Pannerselvam 1993, p. 143). The *Chandogya Upanishad* says, 'self is one and non-dual i.e., *Ekam evadvitiam*' and also claims 'this self is Brahman' and it is the self of man' (*CU*: 4, 2, 1). It seems that there are two aspects of the same self: one is the self-viewed as empirical ego by saying 'I am in pain' when it is covered by *maya* and other is the self, when it is conscious, viewed as transcendental ego by saying 'I am Brahman' (*Aham brahmasmi*) (*BU*: 1.4.10). In the conscious state, it is devoid of qualities and forms and is non-relational. Therefore, the *Katha Upanishad* says that "the nature of Brahman is such that it cannot be grasped by debates and discussion. It cannot be put into words. It can be learnt by experiences alone." (*KU*: 1.3.10). So we cannot grasp the nature of Brahman in our perceptions and descriptions of the world. No expression can express it, since to say of an experience that it is 'higher' or 'mystical' is to attempt to go beyond the limits of language. The walls of our cage set by the language do not permit to convey the sense of mystical. Wittgenstein calls it absolutely hopeless attempt to run against these walls (Wittgenstein 1965, p. 11).

## Conclusion

From the above discussion, we conclude that the resemblance between Wittgenstein and Sankara on the issue of 'higher' is regarded as mystical. Both admit that a man can be liberated from the entanglement of the worldly things, once knowledge of absolute reality is attained. The attainment of knowledge is possible when the self is seen not *in* the world but *with* it. The self, according to them, is interpreted as the metaphysical self that realizes the higher knowledge of life and the world at the transcendental level. The transcendental, for them, is pertaining to the higher order knowledge of the self and its relation to the world. It is the mystical experience where one can grasp the oneness of the self and the world. In this sense, life becomes mystical and realizes its higher meaning which transcends the empirical contents and the language. So any attempt to explain the higher through language is simply nonsense. One of the outcomes of this paper is that there can be found an affinity between the notion of the higher realm of the life in Wittgenstein and the realm the Advaitic Brahman.

## Abbreviations

*NB*: Notebooks 1914-1916  
*TLP*: Tractatus-Logico-Philosophicus  
*CV*: Culture and Value  
*LE*: A Lecture on Ethics  
*BM*: Brahmajnanavalimala  
*VC*: Vivekachudamani  
*SU*: Svetasvatara Upanisad  
*BU*: Brihadaranyaka Upanishad  
*CU*: Chāndogya Upanishad  
*KU*: Katha Upanishad  
*BG*: Bhagavad Gita  
*BH*: Bhamati  
*AS*: Advaita-Siddhi

## Acknowledgments

We acknowledge Odisha State Higher Education Council, Govt. of Odisha, India for providing seed fund research projects under OURIIP scheme.

## References

- Balasubramanian R (1985) Ramana Maharshi, the liberated-in-life. *Indian Council of Philosophical Annual* 17: 218–232.
- Chandra S (2002) *Wittgenstein: new perspectives*. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research.
- Mallick M, Sirola VS (2012) What is 'Higher' about values? A Wittgensteinian response. *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research* 29(2): 105–124.
- Musalgaonkar GS (2014) *Vedantasara*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Krishnadas Academy.
- Pannerselvam S (1993) *The problem of meaning with reference to Wittgenstein and Sankara: a study in the philosophy of language*. Madras: University of Madras.
- Pradhan RC (2008) Wittgenstein's transcendental ethics: a re-construction. In KC Pandey (ed.), *Ludwig Wittgenstein Ethics and Religion*, 59–89. Jaipur: Rawat Publications.
- Pradhan RC (2009) Rajendra Prasad on Wittgenstein's transcendental ethics. In B Kar (ed.), *Ethics, Language & Tradition: Essays on Philosophy of Rajendra Prasad*, 279–302. New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research.
- Wittgenstein L (1961a) *Notebooks 1914-1916*. Edited by GH von Wright and GEM Anscombe. Translated by GEM Anscombe. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Wittgenstein L (1961b) *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. Translated by DF Pears and BF McGuinness. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Wittgenstein L (1965) A lecture on ethics. *The Philosophical Review* 74(1): 3–12.
- Wittgenstein L (1980) *Culture and value*. Edited by GH von Wright, H Nyman. Translated by P Winch. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.